

## CONSENT FORM - ONLINE THERAPY OR ONLINE MEDICAL APPOINTMENT

*Please read the information below as this sets out the boundaries to our online clinical and therapy work. This is a consent form and signing this form is your agreement for services conducted by Anxiety NZ Trust. This consent is an addition to the face-to-face consent forms you are required to sign.*

You must be at least 18 years old to consent to online counselling. Consent can be provided by a parent/guardian for anyone under 18 years old.

Online counselling is not suitable if you are experiencing an enduring mental health illness or are experiencing acute distress. If you feel you are in crisis or are in danger of harming yourself or others, then it is imperative that you contact the emergency services for help immediately.

Sessions can be via video or telephone calls. You will need access to video facilities on your computer or phone and you will be informed of which software to download. A username may or may not be required. Anxiety NZ will provide information and advice to help you join an online appointment. You will need to be ready to connect at the agreed time for sessions. Sessions are 50 minutes long online.

All sessions should be treated like an in-office session. No outside distractions: turn off cell phones and close other computer programs. Make sure you are in a good quality internet zone for highest quality video and audio. No third parties will be in or near the session at any time without the therapist's knowledge. We do our best to ensure that all information is kept confidential and we ask that you do the same. All counselling emails and notes that are made as part of our work are owned by Anxiety NZ Trust. Please do not post/share any of our communication or work together on social forums or to third parties.

It is important to understand that there are risks involved in online therapy.

### Technical Difficulties

If technical problems occur, for example internet breakdown, we will attempt to reconnect. If reconnection cannot occur, we will contact you to reschedule the session or switch to a phone call.

### Provider fees

Your network provider may charge you for the cost of using the internet to attend the online session. Anxiety New Zealand is not responsible for any such fees that online therapy may incur.

### Privacy Risks

Using technologies can carry significant privacy risks. Any internet based communication is not 100% guaranteed to be secure/confidential. Anxiety NZ Trust will make every reasonable effort to keep information secure and confidential, but are not responsible if an outside party gains access to confidential information by bypassing security measures. Potential risks to confidentiality include:

- limitations associated with the security of the technology (e.g. system breakdowns)
- authorised access by someone other than the client (e.g. an Internet Service Provider system administrator, a computer repair technician, or other family members who may be sharing a computer with you)
- unauthorised access to the client's computer and messages (e.g. if the client's computer is hacked or stolen).

Security issues that have the potential to compromise confidentiality could occur on the client's system, the therapist's system, or both. A privacy breach may occur if material is incorrectly addressed, or if either the therapist's or the client's technology is not secure or is used by more than one user.

### **Computer Privacy, Safety and Data Protection**

When working online it is important to maintain security through reasonable measures to ensure confidentiality and safe working procedures. Having a password on your device gives you extra security so that others do not gain access to information regarding your therapy sessions. If you have access to a shared computer then it is important you have your own personal password that other people do not have access to. Our therapists will be using devices that have firewall and antivirus protection installed to protect our software and hardware from third party or viruses. Normal contact, for appointments etc. can be via ordinary email, SMS, or a phone call to reception.

### **Confidentiality**

Please ensure that you have a private and safe space in which to have your sessions and that you will not be disturbed whilst in session. Any form of online therapy requires physical privacy for both the client and therapist to ensure confidentiality and to create the environment needed for concentration, focus, self-disclosure and reflection. The client is responsible for understanding the potential risks of confidentiality being breached through unencrypted email, lack of password protection or leaving information on a public or shared access device. These requirements are in addition to the face-to-face confidentiality and consent forms you are required to sign.

### **Cancellation Fees**

A late cancellation fee or Did Not Attend (DNA) fee may apply if you book an online session and don't attend online. This is \$80 for 48 – 24 hours' notice and \$160 for less than 24 hours' notice. We endeavour to send text reminders 7 days and 1 day before your appointment. A fee will still apply for a late cancellation or DNA if you miss an appointment due to your telecommunication company not delivering the reminder or other technical issue. Please refer to our updated cancellation policy for more information.

*By signing below:*

*I am choosing to facilitate counselling sessions through the internet or via telephone. I have read and understand I can discuss the above information with my therapist and clarify any questions I may have. I understand the risks and benefits of therapy, the nature and limits of confidentiality, and what is expected of me as a client of the therapeutic services. I understand I am able to clarify anything about consent at any time before or after signing this document.*

Client/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Sign \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist: \_\_\_\_\_ Sign \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_